

NATURAL RESOURCE COMMISSION[571]

Notice of Intended Action

Twenty-five interested persons, a governmental subdivision, an agency or association of 25 or more persons may demand an oral presentation hereon as provided in Iowa Code section 17A.4(1)“b.”

Notice is also given to the public that the Administrative Rules Review Committee may, on its own motion or on written request by any individual or group, review this proposed action under section 17A.8(6) at a regular or special meeting where the public or interested persons may be heard.

Pursuant to the authority of Iowa Code sections 481A.6, 481A.38, 481A.39, 481A.87, 481A.90, and 455A.5(6), the Natural Resource Commission hereby gives Notice of Intended Action to amend Chapter 108, “Mink, Muskrat, Raccoon, Badger, Opossum, Weasel, Striped Skunk, Fox (Red and Gray), Beaver, Coyote, River Otter, Bobcat, Gray (Timber) Wolf and Spotted Skunk Seasons,” Iowa Administrative Code.

Chapter 108 sets the season dates, bag limits, possession limits and areas open to hunting or trapping furbearers. The proposed amendment increases the quota for bobcats from 350 to 450 and increases the quota for river otters from 650 to 850. Both populations appear capable of sustaining the increased harvest.

Any interested person may make written suggestions or comments on the proposed amendment on or before May 23, 2012. Written comments may be directed to the Iowa Department of Natural Resources, Wildlife Bureau Chief, Wallace State Office Building, 502 E. 9th Street, Des Moines, Iowa 50319-0034; by E-mail at wildlife@dnr.iowa.gov; or by fax at (515)281-6794. Persons who wish to convey their comments orally may contact the Wildlife Bureau at (515)281-5034 or by visiting the fourth floor of the Wallace State Office Building during regular business hours.

There will be a public hearing on May 23, 2012, at 1 p.m. in the auditorium on the second floor of the Wallace State Office Building. At the public hearing, persons may present their views either orally or in writing. Participants will be asked to give their names and addresses for the record and to confine their remarks to the subject of the amendment.

Any persons who intend to attend the public hearing and have special requirements, such as those related to hearing or mobility impairments, should contact the Department of Natural Resources and request specific accommodations.

Increasing the quota for bobcats and river otters will have a positive jobs impact on the state by increasing overall trapping activity. By raising the quotas, trappers have a better opportunity to actually take a bobcat or otter before the quotas are filled. This means increased business for the private sector in the following areas: hunting and trapping gear and other related equipment, and taxidermy work. It could also lead to increased business for restaurants, hotels, and gas stations as people move around the state participating in the sport.

This amendment is intended to implement Iowa Code sections 481A.6, 481A.38, 481A.39, 481A.87, and 481A.90.

The following amendment is proposed.

Amend subrule 108.7(3) as follows:

108.7(3) Quotas and seasonal bag limit.

a. Seasonal bag limit. The seasonal bag limit is 3 river otters and 1 bobcat per person.

b. Quotas. The quota for the number of river otters that may be taken is ~~650~~ 850 statewide. The quota for the number of bobcats that may be taken is ~~350~~ 450 in the open area. The season shall end for river otters when the number of river otters trapped, as determined by the harvest reporting system, reaches the quota. The season shall end for bobcats when the number of bobcats taken, as determined by the harvest reporting system, reaches the quota. Trappers shall be allowed a grace period that ends on midnight of the day after the quota is reached to clear their traps of river otters or bobcats. River otters or bobcats found in traps during the grace period may be kept even though the quota is exceeded provided

that the trapper has not reached the trapper's personal bag limit. River otters or bobcats trapped after the grace period or in excess of the seasonal bag limit must be turned over to the department; the trapper shall not be penalized.